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A darkly funny, compulsively readable debut novel about two young flight attendants coming of age at 35,000 feet

When twenty-three-year-old Emily Cavanaugh's marriage to her abusive high school sweetheart ends, she trades in her dull smalltown life for an all-access pass to see the world as a flight attendant. Hoping for a new start, she moves to San Francisco to bunk with six other new flight attendants. Among them is KC Valentine, a free spirit who encourages Emily to shed her mousy ways and start collecting experiences as exciting as her passport stamps. Emily soon follows KC's advice a little too well, falling in love with an older, married co-worker named Tien, a father to two young girls. But as Emily and Tien become more deeply entangled, KC grows distraught. Neither her friends nor co-workers know the real reason she became a flight attendant: to find her father who abandoned her as a child. As Emily and KC fly from Vegas to Boston, San Francisco to London, Chicago to Delhi, each searching for love and acceptance, they're torn between passion and moral conviction, freedom and belonging.

An assured debut from a former flight attendant, *Love Me Anyway* deftly captures the complexities of love, friendship, and family, the excitement and loneliness that come from living everywhere and nowhere, and the surprising detours life can take when you set out to discover the world.

Love Me Anyway Details

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From Reader Review Love Me Anyway for online ebook

Kristin says

As a travel junkie, I've indulged a fantasy or two about being a flight attendant if I was young and single. This book gives me a glimpse of exactly what that might've been like - both the good and the bad. I loved that side of the book and was also eager to find out whether the two main characters, Emily and KC, ever got their issues worked out and their lives pointed in the direction they wanted. The book kept me turning the (digital) pages and annoying my family with, "Just let me finish this chapter. Oops, I started another chapter."

My only complaint is that the last few chapters seemed a bit rushed. I think I would've felt more satisfied with a truncated ending that just hinted at what was to come for Emily and KC instead of spelling it out. But your mileage may vary on that point.

On the whole quite enjoyable, and next time I fly, I'll be extra nice to the flight attendants!

Marlene says

Come take a ride with Emily, KC and their crew as they travel the world in hopes of discovering themselves and maybe even love along the way. But life as a flight attendant isn't always a smooth ride. They will encounter turbulence along the way. So sit back, relax, and enjoy the ride.

Most young adults would jump at the opportunity to experience the world, travel to exotic destinations and get paid while doing so. Emily Cavanaugh isn't most people. At twenty three years old, she has already been married and now is in the process of trying to get away from her abusive husband. What better way to do that and gain distance between them than by working as a flight attendant? Wanting to make a fresh start to her life, Emily moves from her small town of Bakersfield to San Francisco where she shares an apartment with six other flight attendants. Determined to get away from her husband and gain some independence from her father Emily takes to the skies. Little does she realize that you can't run from your problems because they are never far behind and the loneliness from never being in the same place for too long gets daunting. Thankfully she has the support and companionship of her roommate and fellow flight attendant, KC Valentine. KC is everything that Emily is not ... confident, free spirited and sexy. KC's determined to transform Emily from her plain Jane appearance and shy ways and bring out her wild side while taking on new experiences. But who would've thought that this little transformation would lead Emily into the arms of an older, married man and fellow flight attendant?

Just like Emily, KC's quest to become a flight attendant wasn't for the freedom to travel to world. She holds her own secrets and reasons for taking to the skies. Back in Las Vegas her mom lays in a hospital bed dying of cancer while her father, who left them when she was only a little girl, enjoys the life of paradise while living in Hawaii with "the bimbo". KC's main reason for becoming a flight attendant was to take advantage of the flight incentives and, without her mom's knowledge, fly to Hawaii to finally confront her father. But will she be able to find the man who left her and her mother sad and alone? Or will her feeling of abandonment just grow stronger?

Love Me Anyway is Tiffany Hawk's debut novel. Having worked as a flight attendant, Hawk knows first

hand all that happens behind the scenes as a member of a flight crew. She's able to give the book an intimate feel while also providing an accurate depiction of life in the air. This book takes you on an adventure around the world. I felt like I was right there with them as they flew to London, India, Hawaii and beyond. I found the characters to be likeable and I enjoyed seeing how they each overcame their struggles, who they turned to and how their lives changed. I thought the book was very well written and enjoyed it very much. I would definitely recommend this book to others. It was the type of book that you hated to put down and couldn't wait to find out what happened next.

Anna Laura says

This was a fun read. It's always fascinating to get a glimpse into another career, and this was a fabulous insight into the life of a flight attendant. Love Me Anyway is a good blend of humor, sensuality, and soul-searching. The characters have compelling backstories and make for an enjoyable literary escape. I would read it again!

Cynthia Romanowski says

I'm afraid people will look at the cover of this book and the summary inside the flap and dismiss it as "women's fiction" (whatever that means) and that's too bad because it is more than that. Just when you think you are settled in to the rhythms a flight attendant's life Hawk's story goes international. Just when you think the book is only about these two young woman Hawk gives us an intimate look into one of her male characters as he returns to Vietnam and reflects on his broken marriage. Just when you think the emotional drama has climaxed, the events September 11th change the protagonists forever. The author writes with a great sense of authority over her subject matter, from the way it smells in Delhi to a view of the northern lights from the window of a plane, Hawk has a real talent for evoking a sense of place. This is one of many things that make this book compulsively readable. It is impossible to get bored reading this book and it's impossible to dismiss her characters who all feel real and flawed and completely relatable.

Pia Chatterjee says

This writer is the next Penelope Lively.

Dawn Scott says

Loved it! It felt very real, which I really liked. My only criticism, I wanted MORE! I really couldn't put it down.

Mark says

A total delight!

Maggie says

I almost wish this novel wasn't called "Love Me Anyway," because I don't want it to be dismissed as chick lit. While the book does examine the relationships and issues of two modern women, I think it's incomplete to categorize it with that label. It's like looking at a lemon meringue pie and calling it a cake.

This is the story of Emily and KC, two United flight attendants -- one is running from her past, while the other searching for home. Despite a lot of turbulence, the women eventually find their way while flying the friendly skies.

The characters are lovingly crafted, flaws and all, and I was sad they only inhabited the pages of this book. Also, as someone who loves travel and has always had a secret fantasy of running away to become a flight attendant, the insider info into that industry was fascinating.

Craft-wise, the story is told in alternating points of view, which done seamlessly. The second person chapter definitely stood out, but I liked that most of the chapters were written in first and third. Sometimes it brought me intimately close to the characters, sometimes it distanced me, but each time it was used effectively.

Overall, it's a fine debut novel, and I can't wait to see what Tiffany Hawk writes next.

Linda says

Biggest appeal for me was a peek at the world of flight attendants in a time after the glamorous air hostess days and before 2001. Recommend to readers who like Jennifer Close's "Girls in White Dresses" and to Kristin Hannah, Caroline Leavitt, etc. readers.

Jenny says

I received this book in a First Reads giveaway. This is a must read; I could not put it down! Love Me Anyway is the first book in a long time that really grabbed my attention and pulled at my heart. In her debut novel, Tiffany Hawk takes you into a world so real and captivating. It is clear that her personal experiences in the Airline world helped shape such a wonderful novel. Absolutely wonderful.

Kim Fay says

I love it when authors write about a unique world they know personally, and I love it when authors take risks. Tiffany Hawk hits both of those marks. In this novel about flight attendants for United Airlines, Hawk knows whereof she writes. She, too, flew with that airline, which means that the details in this novel are wonderfully intimate. Funny, too -- i.e. On her travels the main character sees a man so "obscenely American that even I want to pickpocket him." But I didn't just enjoy the details about being a flight attendant. I also appreciated the descriptions of what it's like to live such an itinerant, lonely life. That's what this book is about. Loneliness and the search for connection with others. At one point, the main character shows up at the door of the man she's having an affair with: "You have to be here. You need him to show you the want and heat and pain of life. One night with him and life will hit you with everything it has at once." As for the risks in this book, that's one of them -- the shifting points of view, not only from character to character, but from first person to second person. Hawk also bounds from scene to scene, leaving many moments in between to the reader's imagination. I love being trusted as a reader. I also love being left wondering at times, as long as I don't feel confused. I was impressed by how Hawk moves the narrative forward without feeling the need to describe every little moment -- or even some of the big moments, for that matter. It's hard for me to go into deeper description on this point, since I don't want to give anything away in this story about friendship, family, love, 9/11 and the Vietnam war ... yes, the Vietnam war. But this is not by any means a novel about war, or even about 9/11. And that is remarkable in itself -- for a book to embrace such big issues while crafting a tale that is a tender reflection on relationships.

Dana Sachs says

Oh, this is a lovely book! There's so much to enjoy. If you've ever flown on a plane (and who hasn't?), then the details of a flight attendant's life are fascinating and may make us all kinder and more sympathetic the next time we shove trash at one of them and expect them to say "thanks." Mostly, though, it's the characters and story that make this novel so compelling. The two main characters are so well-drawn that they feel completely real on the page, and it's impossible not to feel for their challenges--they are living what seems like a glamorous and exciting life (and in many ways, it is), but they are also stressed, exhausted, scared, uncertain, lonely, and looking for love and stability. The secondary characters are vivid, too, from the old-hand flight attendants who have made a life of constant motion to Emily's dad, who always has to "teach" her to expect the worst out of life. Finally, the story moves so quickly and effortlessly that I raced right through it.

Kathleen Rodgers says

Snappy dialogue and great characterization!

Come fly with Emily and KC as they navigate their new careers as flight attendants for United Airlines. Most of the story takes place in 2000 and alternates between the two main characters. I started reading the free sample at 5:30 one morning when I couldn't sleep. Minutes later I downloaded the entire novel and for two days I've been immersed in the lives of these two young women and their coworkers.

Good writing transports you, and I feel like I've "worked" many flights pushing the cart up and down the aisle and dealing with unruly passengers and inflight emergencies. I've also "traveled" to many cities and

countries and experienced different cultures in Tiffany Hawk's authentic tale full of compassion and respect for her two main characters. Even her secondary characters come across as real people. I adored the passages about "senior mamas" Val and Sue. They had some of the best lines in the book.

Some of the most moving passages in the novel for me appear in chapter 28 in a letter penned by a male flight attendant. I couldn't stop reading.

The story is layered with an in-depth look at human relationships. I experienced the full range of emotions throughout the tale.

Highly recommended!

Kathleen M. Rodgers, author of *Seven Wings to Glory*

Eric Althoff says

For KC and Emily, young women in their early twenties, the life of a flight attendant represents many things: adventure, escape, opportunity, an attempt to start fresh and salve the wounds of the past. What neither realizes is that life "up in the air" will be far more complex and present many new problems of life, love and opportunity than either of them could have bargained for.

Tiffany Hawk's debut novel takes the reader and her characters on a journey of several dimensions. As a freshman effort, "Love Me Anyway" is an outstanding work for a first-time novelist. Hawk writes with a sure hand, illuminating her characters' hopes, dreams and manifold flaws without condemning or judging. She has a clear understanding of these two women--and of the universal struggles that we all face to find meaning and companionship.

Her writing takes us "there," and the book has a very lived-in feel thanks to Hawk's own experience as a flight attendant. What she does exceedingly well is present flight attending not as the glamorous, bombshell-centric business it was in the Sixties (although references to more grizzled flight attendants harboring nostalgia for such "good old days" are sprinkled throughout), but as the often-insufferable, working-class, barely above poverty-level job that it is for those at the bottom of the food chain. As with most in the lesser-paying professions--especially those in the service-oriented industries--the flight attendants in this book develop a detached yet necessarily cynical professionalism that rings absolutely true to the voices of their characters. It's a job, often a shitty one, but it's *their job*, and they take it seriously.

Like rock stars, their "office" takes KC and Emily to exotic locales on a daily basis, but their off-hours are spent mostly not exploring new cities but rather battling jet lag in identical hotel rooms, surrounded by booze and the unbridled, confused sexual energy that comes from a perversely liberated notion of having little sense of home but that offered by the job. (It is little wonder that KC begins an affair with a rock n' roll musician--their lifestyles, while widely divergent in income--parallel in itinerancy.)

Hawk absolutely excels at sprinkling in minor details that bring the pages to life. It is easy to say that two characters walk across the Golden Gate Bridge; it is another to describe *precisely* the way the wind feels--and smells--as it screams and whips the characters' faces as they trek across the Bay hand-in-hand (having

done this walk myself, I can attest). The text is rife with wonderful gallows and dark humor, yet the cynicism of the characters doesn't sink the story; rather, it adds to their dimensions as fully realized humans. (One must wonder how much of the author herself can be found in KC and Emily.)

"Love Me Anyway" is far more about its atmosphere and its world than plot specifics, creating in microcosm a snapshot of one of our most important industries and the men and women who work thanklessly to get you from A to B. Just like the rest of us, KC and Emily will struggle with finances, falling in love with the wrong persons, the loss of parents, self-doubt and, ultimately, find a sense of hope and purpose that can only come with experience and the gentle lessons of the years. A coda at the end shows what becomes of the two women after a decade, which I would not dream of spoiling, but it's a "happy ending" of sorts that, rather than being forced, is actually earned.

This is one helluva debut from someone we can only hope will become one of the great authors of this new century.

(NOTE: I had the rare pleasure of meeting Ms. Hawk at an event in New York in November 2011. At the time she had been struggling with getting the book published for some time and had arrived at a state of perhaps mournful acceptance that it might be time to give up the ghost and move on. Not two weeks later came the phenomenal news that her agent had in fact sold the book. Just as for KC and Emily, the light can only come after some dark times in the tunnel. Bravo, Tiffany!)

Maria says

I loved the premise of this book; two women want to change their lives so, they both decide to work for United Airlines, while pursuing their dreams of traveling the world. KC, a free-spirit, ends up meeting a few men along her travels, while Emily, a recently-divorced woman, wants to find true love as she embarks upon a variety of cities that make her feel excited about life again. I enjoyed the stories that were told by each of the women as they found each other, with Emily detailing her disappointing rendezvous with Tien, to KC, finding out that she is pregnant, and unsure who the father is. I also enjoyed reading about the places that they visited, and the flight attendant techniques that were detailed throughout their journeys. When it came to the part about 9/11, I was enthralled to read about how difficult it was for them, as they witnessed the loss of their jobs, and their dreams, all at once. A great read, and one that will both excite, and make you feel sad at the same time.
